

# Residential Development

Traditionally a neighborhood dominated by single-family detached dwellings, Norwich and the surrounding area offers a balance of single family and multi-family housing options. Over the past 10 years, the perimeter of the area has seen a shift toward more renter-occupied units.

The majority of single family housing lies between Ashlawn Street and Warwick Street along Russell Avenue and Roanoke Avenue. Two developments located on Mountain View Terrace comprise the only multifamily developments in the neighborhood.



*Norwich has many good examples of historic worker housing.*



All of the existing single-family houses in the Norwich neighborhood were built prior to World War II, mostly between the 1890s and the 1920s for the employees of the factories and the mill. Housing in Norwich is quite affordable. Smaller houses on compact lots make for good values and lower maintenance needs. Although it is a tight-knit community, some rental housing along the perimeter of Norwich has created a lower percentage of owner-occupied housing than the city-wide average.

There are 303 occupied dwelling units in Norwich; 112 which are owner-occupied (37%) and 191 are renter-occupied (63%). In contrast, Roanoke has 56% owner-occupancy and 44% renter-occupancy. Residents note that the core area of Norwich around Russell and Roanoke Avenues is mostly owner-occupied with long-term residents. The area west of Bridge Street has several apartment buildings that account for the high level of renter occupancy.

## Neighborhood Design



From a historical viewpoint, Norwich can be identified by its intact rows of one-story, frame, shotgun style houses that were built for the mill workers. Constructed during the housing boom of the 1890s, they were advertised as "attractive cottages are being built to accommodate the laborers."

*Historic streetscapes composed of workers housing along Penn Street(above) and Roanoke Avenue.*



The grouping of the worker houses remains predominantly intact along Roanoke and Russell Avenues and Penn Street. Larger, two-story frame houses are scattered along the perimeter of the workers' housing where the managers of the mills and other industrial plants in the area resided. While most of these houses remain, some of them, especially on both sides of Buford Street, have been destroyed by fire, time, and development.

Some light manufacturing properties have been built up along the southern edge of the Norwich neighborhood predominately along Buford Avenue, where larger residential houses once stood. A few apartment complexes have been built along the southern ridge that flanks Norwich along Mountain View Terrace.



*A streetscape of the earliest houses that were built in Norwich along Penn Street in 1890.*



*A good example of an early church in Norwich, the Woodside Presbyterian Church built in 1920.*

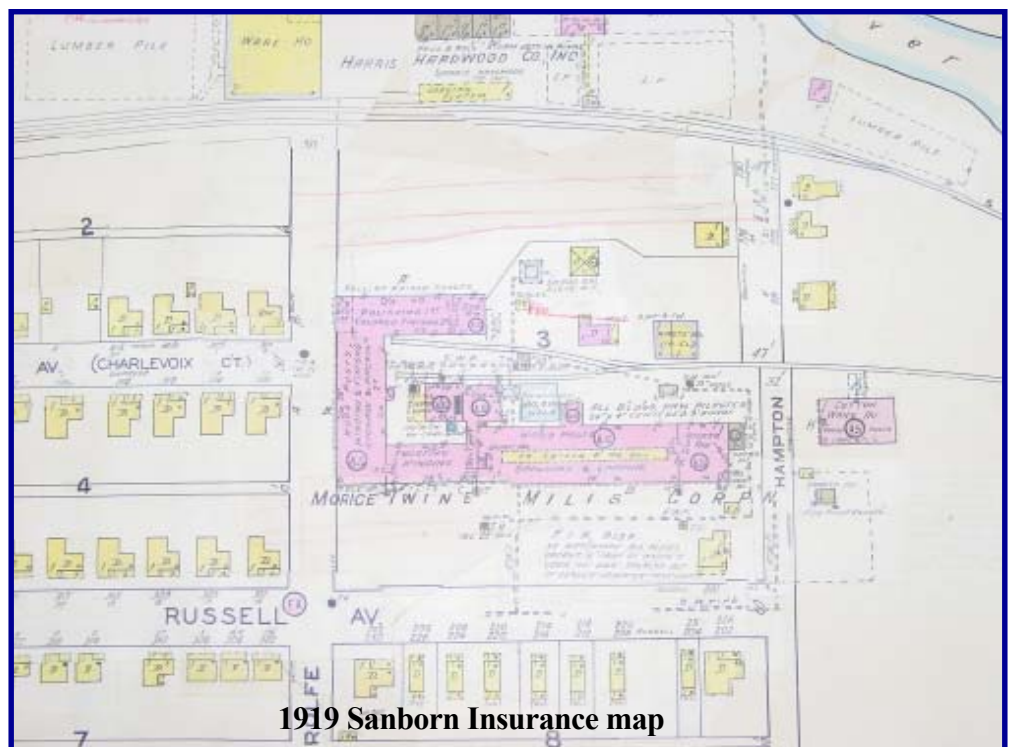




Left intact over the generations, the core neighborhood appears to be eligible as a historic district. An important tool that can be used to maintain Norwich's historic architecture and sense of community is to nominate it as a historic district to the National Register of Historic Places.

This is an advantageous opportunity for a neighborhood because there are no restrictions for being listed on the National Register; it is strictly honorific and does not encumber the property owner in making changes to their property. It does allow them, however, to apply for state and federal tax-credits for major rehabilitative projects (such as converting the old Norwich School to a neighborhood center) as long as they follow National Park Service guidelines. While its residents are not currently receptive to it becoming a historic district, its aging housing stock, however, will require more repair and sensitive rehabilitation in order to maintain the historic character of the village-setting of Norwich.

Further, because of its proximity to the Roanoke River, Norwich in general, and the area along the river in particular, could contain a high concentration of Native-American artifacts. Its archeological potential should be considered a valuable asset and should be investigated in the future, especially concerning any development along the river.



## Population

According to the 2000 Census, the Norwich neighborhood has 652 people and 303 households. The table below documents the general demographic profile of Norwich.

The age distribution in Norwich is similar to that of the city as a whole. Outlying apartment buildings significantly change the demographic profile from the core area of the neighborhood.

Age Distribution: Comparison between Norwich and Roanoke			
		Norwich	Roanoke
0-17 years	179	27%	23%
18-34 years	190	29%	31%
35-64 years	218	33%	30%
65 + years	65	10%	16%
Total	652	US Census 2000	

The racial composition of Norwich is similar to that of the city as a whole.

Racial Composition			
		Norwich	Roanoke
White	472	72%	69%
Black	161	25%	27%
Multiracial	19	3%	4%
Total	652	US Census 2000	